Lavender lives

By Noel Black and John Dicker

Yes Nurse! No Nurse! *screening Friday, Sept. 19 at 8 p.m.*

It's time for the fourth annual Pikes Peak Lavender Film Festival — our very own gay, lesbian, bisexual and celluloid cinema extravaganza. Let's face it: There couldn't be a better year to support the PPLFF. Arts organizations everywhere are suffering badly, and yet, organizer Alma Cremonesi has valiantly managed to keep the festival afloat, barely rescuing one more endangered element of our local diversity. Not only does the PPLFF help counter the all-too-common perception that Colorado Springs is an anti-gay city, it's also a festival where the vibrant GLBT community in southern Colorado gets a chance to join queers the globe over in the theater for a weekend and rally around a few of its creative achievements. Here's a peek into what the festival has in store for the weekend of Sept. 19 – 21 at the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center.

Friday, Sept. 19

6:30 p.m.: Opening night reception
7:30 p.m.: Introductions and sponsor recognition

Yes Nurse! No Nurse!

Netherlands
Bos Brothers Film-TV Productions
8 p.m.

Musicals always make a comeback in depressed economies. A little glitz can go a long way when it comes to woe forgettin'. Dutch filmmaker Pieter Kramer proves you don't need a bulging Hollywood budget to bring Busby Berkeley dreams to life in *Yes Nurse! No Nurse!* This melodramatic musical is about an evil landlord and an attempted eviction. But like any musical, the plot is an excuse for a show. Lots of umbrella twirling, nurse costumes and charmingly fake-looking sets. It doesn't get any gayer than a musical, so come on down, honey.

— Noel Black

Saturday, Sept. 20

The Bridge Game

United States
North by South Productions
Noon

A formulaic chick flick, Rhomie Thompson and David Lowe's *The Bridge Game* tells the story of the lingering secrets buried within a circle of friends whose weekly bridge game is upended after a member commits suicide. Each year, in commemoration, the gaggle of mostly middle-aged, mostly depressed women return to the bridge from which their friend jumped. There's clunky expository dialogue and the characters trip over each other's lines rather than respond to them. If you're looking for emotional pornography, you're better off renting *Beaches* (again).

—John Dicker

9 Dead Gay Guys

Great Britain
TLA Releasing
2:30 p.m.

The only problem with quirky sex comedies is when they're all quirk and no smirk. Lab Ky Mo's *9 Dead Gay Guys* is a painful exercise in convoluted plot lines, ill-defined characters, and jokes begging for a laugh track. Set in London, it's the story of two young Irishmen (Glenn Mulhern and Brendan Mackey) who supplement their boozing by providing oral services to over-the-hill queens. Before long, they become ensconced in an urban treasure hunt for the stash of cash belonging to a closeted orthodox Jew with a penchant for largesse. But between the bounty and the booty (or is it the booty and the bounty?), they must wade through, yep, nine dead gay guys.

— John Dicker

Gasoline

Italy
Strand Releasing
5:30 p.m.

Who woulda thunk lesbians in Italy would face the exact same kind of treatment as lesbians in Colorado Springs!? In *Gasoline*, the young Lenni wants to live like common dykes and forsakes the bourgeois banalities laid out for her by Mummy. Unfortunately, Mummy has other ideas and crashes Lenni's filling station job only to get whacked by Lenni's über-butch girlfriend, Stella.

This film definitely reeks of "first feature," but a little murder and intrigue patch the gaps in plot and acting.

— Noel Black

Leaving Metropolis

Canada
Original Pictures and Realtime Films
8 p.m.

Despite a few tired characters, including the bitter fag hag and the tortured artist, Brad Fraser's *Leaving Metropolis* manages to transcend its own clichés. Set and filmed in Winnipeg, it's a story of adultery and communication failure as a way of life. A brutally frank painter named David (Troy Ruptash) gains employment at a café owned by a young married couple, Matt (Vince Corazza) and Violet (Cherilee Taylor). With the tact of a Teamster's negotiator, David pushes the young restaurateurs to do better. A one-man Fab 5, the restaurant slowly improves while Matt falls in love with his new employee. What sustains *Leaving Metropolis* is the lingering erotic tension and cutting dialogue that lets its characters' desires brim beneath the surface.

— John Dicker

10 p.m.: After party at the Bijou Bar, 2510 E. Bijou St., 473-5718

Sunday, Sept. 21

Yossi and Jagger

Israel
Strand Releasing
11:30 a.m.

Gay love in the military can be spooky no matter what part of the world you live in. Director Eytan Fox sets his story in Israel where young soldiers Yossi and Jagger must walk the tightrope between love and duty in the macho world of war and conflict.

— Not reviewed

Blue Gate Crossing

Taiwan
Strand Releasing
2 p.m.

Heaven help the straight boy who comes between a young lesbian and her "best friend." Director Yee Chih-yen's *Blue Gate Crossing* is a charming romantic drama that captures the boredom and obsession that constitutes most first loves. In Chinese urbania, Meng (Guey Lun-mei) has fallen for her best friend Lin (Liang

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9 Dead Gay Guys *screening Saturday, Sept. 20 at 2:30 p.m.*

Shu-hui) who, as fate would have it, is smitten with their school's swimming champ, Chang (Chen Bo-lin).

Ever the martyr, Meng plays the ambassador for her incurably shy best friend. Only the incredulous Chang doubts Meng's story and becomes smitten with the young lesbian. Trouble ensues. *Blue Gate Crossing* combines an elegiac piano score with solid performances by its young cast. The ending is more contemplative than melodramatic, suggesting that even a love-struck teen lesbian can move on without bloodshed.

—John Dicker

The Event

Canada
THINKfilm
4:30 p.m.

This is definitely one of the don't-miss films of the festival. Starring Olympia Dukakis, Parker ("it isn't an indie film without her") Posey, Sarah Polley and Brent Carver, *The Event* gets down to brass tacks on the issue of premeditated suicide in terminal AIDS cases. Matt (Brent Carver) is dead at the outset of the film, and flashbacks lead us up to the send-off party he throws for himself and the legal quagmire the event leaves in its wake. Posey plays a bitchy, self-righteous lawyer bent on nailing each and every accomplice to the suicide because it's "against the law," and all the accomplices are there to elucidate the complex moral and ethical issues that make a planned suicide so bloody controversial.

The film has definitely got "moral of the story" written all over it, but it's incredibly well acted and touching nonetheless. Dukakis and Polley steal the show with their comical, yammering, mother-daughter relationship. It's lighthearted enough to feel true, and true enough to be incredibly sad, so be sure to bring your travel pack of Kleenex.

— Noel Black

CAPSULE

Pikes Peak Lavender Film Festival

Fine Arts Center Theater, 30 W. Dale St.

Friday, Sept. 19 – Sunday, Sept. 21

Full Pass: $70; Half Pass: $45; Day pass: $30; Tickets for individual shows: $10

Call: 38-MOVIE; www.pplff.org

Prey for Rock & Roll

USA
MAC Releasing
7:30 p.m.

It's hard to figure out how a film chock-full of so many rock 'n' roll clichés could be so compellingly watchable. Directed by Alex Steyermark, *Prey for Rock & Roll* is based on rocker Cheri Lovedog's (of the Los Angeles punk band Lovedog) rock musical and asks the excellent question: When should an aging rock 'n' roller call it quits? Gina Gershon plays Jacki, the still-hot, but aging band leader and tattoo artist who's about to turn 40. The film follows her, her band, its tribulations and the variously degenerate satellite characters from gig to gig as they rediscover the true meaning of rock 'n' roll (again and again and again).

— Noel Black

10 p.m.: Closing night party at the Hide N' Seek Complex, 512 W. Colorado Ave., 634-9303.

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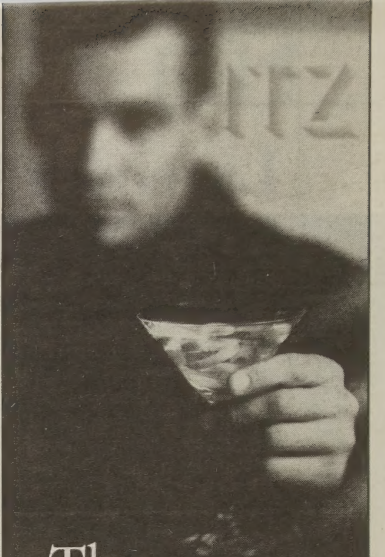

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